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A POSSIBLE CASE OF LUKAN AUTHORSHIP

(JOHN 7 53-8 11)

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In his *Philology of the Gospels*¹ Professor Blass referred somewhat casually to the Lukan style of the *pericope adulterae*. His theory of a Roman edition of Luke's works issued by the author himself, in connection with which his reference was made, has not received very wide acceptance, and so the linguistic phenomena to which he called attention were not made generally known. The motives of the present writer in bringing the subject forward again are not merely that the Lukan style of this passage impressed itself independently upon him, as it might upon any one familiar with Luke's style, but because von Soden's careful study of the text of the passage,² and Harnack's recent use of the style of the Lukan writings³ make it desirable to give a fresh presentation of the evidence.

With regard to the text of the *pericope adulterae* it must at once be confessed that it is one of the most uncertain passages in the whole N. T. The variants are extremely numerous, and as the section is entirely omitted by most of the great uncial MSS., a decision on readings cannot be made by the usual methods of valuation. Von Soden divided the authorities into seven main groups, and attempted to appraise them and arrange them and so to recover the original text. To many however his reconstruction will not seem convincing. It will be safer therefore for us in considering the style of the passage

¹ P. 159 (1898) with a reference to his edition of Luke, (1897) p. xlviii.

² Die Schriften des N. T. I, pp. 486-524.

³ Especially Luke the Physician and The Date of the Acts.

to limit ourselves to no one form of the text but to include all variants, remembering constantly that some of the examples given are probably not the original readings.⁴

The style of Luke, on the other hand, has become better known with the study of his writings. He has the most distinctive vocabulary of any New Testament writer, and a style so individual as to be recognizable in nearly every verse. No matter what his subject or his source, these characteristics make themselves everywhere evident. Not merely in the nativity stories with their canticles at the beginning of his work, nor in the "we" passages at its close, may we find with Harnack abundant evidences of his style. Even the stories which he takes bodily from Mark are filled with his own peculiar ways of speech⁵; so homogeneous is the style of the Lukan writings. It is therefore all the more striking that this brief passage—bearing as it does the evidence of antiquity and verisimilitude, yet certainly not part of the Fourth Gospel, as both its language and the MSS. prove—should reveal nevertheless so many marks, some of them almost unmistakable, of Luke's style.

First let us consider the negative evidence. There are of course some words in the passage that do not occur in Luke or Acts. They are

ἀναμάρτητος

αὐτοφώρῳ αὐτοφόρῳ αὐτῷ τῷ φόρῳ

διακελεύω (μ¹)

καταγράφω (μ^{1 2})

κατακύπτω κάτω κύπτω

κατηγορία ⁴(D) ⁶(μ^{2 3 4 6 7}) (a variant in Lk. 6 7)

μοιχεία (all MSS. except D)

The first five of these are not found in any New Testament writer but are all compound words in the

⁴ All readings that are not found in all groups of MSS. will be marked below with von Soden's symbols for the groups that contain them, e.g., μ¹, μ², etc. The numbers represent very nearly the order of preference given the groups by von Soden.

⁵ See Plummer, Luke, *passim*.

manner of Luke. Compare his use of ἀπο-γράφω, ἀνα-κλύπτω, συν-κλύπτω, δια-τάσσω, etc.⁶

There are also some expressions which are less like Luke than like some other New Testament writer. The mention of the Jews in D and one or two other MSS., the use of "high priests and Pharisees" (μ^1) in place of "scribes and Pharisees," are both variants that agree exactly with the manner of the Fourth Gospel. And the reading (μ^4 ⁵) μηκέτι ἀμάρτανε without ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν agrees exactly with Jn. 5 14. For the reading εἰς καθ' εἰς (μ^2 ^{3 4 5 6 7}) perhaps the nearest parallel is in Mk. 14 19 (εἰς κατὰ εἰς).

Compare now with these possible linguistic affiliations to the other Gospels the likenesses of the passage to Luke-Acts.

The following words or phrases occurring in this passage occur in Luke or Acts but in no other Gospel:

ἀνακλύπτω
 ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν (μ^1 ^{2 3 6 7})
 εἰς ἑκαστός ⁸ (μ^5 ⁶) ⁹ (μ^1)
 ἐπιμένω
 ἐκπειράζω (μ^2 D)⁷
 κατήγορος (μ^3 ^{5 6 7})
 ὀρθρος cf. ὀρθρίζω, ὀρθρινός
 προσποιέομαι (μ^5 ⁷)
 σὺ οὖν ⁸
 συνείδησις (μ^5 ⁷)

More striking still is the list of words found in the *pericope*, which though not limited to Luke are more abundant in his work than in the other Gospels. From Hawkins' lists of Lukan phrases ⁹ we find in this passage:

ἄγω (μ^1 ^{2 3 5 6 7})
 εἶπεν δέ, εἶπαν δέ

⁶ Plummer, Luke, p. 252: "Lk. is fond of compounds with *διά*." There are over 50 words compounded with *κατά* which occur in Luke or Acts but not in Mt., Mk., or Jn.

⁷ The word occurs also in Mt. 4 7 (= Lk. 4 12) in a quotation from Dt. 6 16.

⁸ According to Bruder only Lk. 4 7, 22 70; Ac. 23 21.

⁹ Horae Synopticae, Second Edition, pp. 15-29.

ἔρωτάω ($\mu^1 2 3 4 5 7$)
 ἔχω, with infinitive (μ^5)
 λαός
 νῦν
 πᾶς, or ἅπας ὁ λαός ($\mu^1 3 5 6 7$)
 παραγίνομαι
 πλὴν ($\mu^5 7$)
 ὡς = when

According to Harnack¹⁰ we are justified in marking as Lukan:

εἰς τὸν οἶκον ($\mu^2 3 5 6 7$)
 ἐν μέσῳ
 πορεύομαι
 αὕτη ἡ γυνή ($\mu^1 2 3 4 5$)
 ὡς δέ

Further examples may be gained from the lexicon:

οἱ δὲ ἀκούσαντες ($\mu^2 3 4 5 6 7$) (once in Mk.)
 ἄρχομαι ἀπό (once in Mt.)
 παραγίνομαι εἰς ($\mu^1 2 3 5 7$) (once in Mt.)
 πορεύου (twice in Jn.)

In the following cases there is a likeness of expression such as commonly exists between the different parts of Luke's writings:

- Ἰησοῦς δὲ ἐπορεύθη εἰς τὸ ὄρος τῶν ἐλαιῶν
 Lk. 22 39 καὶ ἐξελθὼν ἐπορεύθη κατὰ τὸ ἔθος εἰς τὸ ὄρος τῶν ἐλαιῶν
 ὀρθροῦ δὲ πάλιν παρεγένετο εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν καὶ πᾶς ὁ λαὸς ἤρχετο
 πρὸς αὐτόν
 Lk. 21 38 καὶ πᾶς ὁ λαὸς ὠρθρίζεν πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ
 καὶ στήσαντες αὐτὴν ἐν μέσῳ λέγουσιν αὐτῷ
 Ac. 4 7 καὶ στήσαντες αὐτοὺς ἐν μέσῳ ἐπυθάνοντο
 ταύτην εὗρομεν ἐπ' αὐτωφώρῳ μοιχευομένην ($\mu^6 7$)
 Lk. 23 2 τοῦτον εὗραμεν διαστρέφοντα τὸ ἔθνος ἡμῶν κτλ; cf. Ac. 24 5.
 ἵνα σχῶσιν (ἔχωσιν, εὔρωσιν) κατηγορεῖν (κατηγορίαν κατ')
 αὐτοῦ

¹⁰ See Date of the Acts, pp. 5, 6, 9, 15; Luke the Physician, pp. 40, 50 f.

Lk. 6 7 ἵνα εὕρωσιν κατηγορεῖν (κατηγορίαν κατ') αὐτοῦ

Lk. 11 54 D al ἵνα εὕρωσιν κατηγορήσαι

Ac. 28 19 ἔχων τι κατηγορεῖν

δρθρου δὲ βαθέως πάλιν ἦλθεν (μ⁶)

Lk. 24 1 δρθρου βαθέως ἐπὶ τὸ μνήμα ἦλθαν

καὶ καθίσας ἐδίδασκεν αὐτοὺς (μ^{1 2 3 5 6 7})

Lk. 5 3 καθίσας δὲ [. . .] ἐδίδασκεν τοὺς ὄχλους

Further examples of likeness are in construction and sentence structure:

With πρῶτος βαλέτω λίθον compare

Lk. 2 2 αὕτη ἀπογραφὴ πρώτη ἐγένετο and other adverbial uses of the adjective in Lk. 21 34, 24 18, 22, Ac. 20 6 D, 28 13.

With the position of the pronoun in σὺ οὖν τί λέγεις; compare

Lk. 16 7 σὺ δὲ πόσον ὀφείλεις;

Ac. 11 17 ἐγὼ τίς ἤμην δύνατος κωλύσαι τὸν θεόν;

Ac. 19 15 ὑμεῖς δὲ τίνες ἐστέ;

With the use of the participle in ἐπέμενον ἐρωτῶντες compare

Ac. 12 16 ἐπέμενον κρούων

Lk. 7 45 οὐ διέλιπεν καταφιλοῦσα

Also Lk. 23 12; Ac. 8 16

With κατελείφθη μόνος compare

Lk. 10 40 μόνην με κατέλειπεν διακονεῖν

With the brief οὐδεὶς in οὐδεὶς, κύριε of the woman's reply compare

Lk. 22 35 . . . μή τινος ὑστηρήσατε; οἱ δὲ εἶπαν, οὐθενός

With κύριε in the same reply compare

Ac. 10 14, 11 8 μηδαμῶς, κύριε

Lk. 17 37 ποῦ, κύριε;

Ac. 9 5, 22 8, 26 15 τίς εἶ, κύριε;

Ac. 10 4 τί ἐστιν, κύριε;

With πορεύου· ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν μηκέτι ἀμάρτανε compare

Lk. 5 10 μὴ φοβοῦ· ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν ἀνθρώπους ἔσῃ ζωγρῶν

No other N. T. writing has such close parallels as those given from Luke and Acts.

In view of the many misuses of the linguistic argument, especially in connection with Luke-Acts, it would be rash to assume at once from this evidence that the *pericope adulterae* is written by Luke. It is necessary to acknowledge that there are many limitations to the force of the examples given. First, few of them have unanimous textual support; second, many of them are not very unusual phrases in Greek literature. That no other New Testament writer uses a word is often an accident. But if N. T. standards are to be applied, there are a few unquestioned words that are really characteristic of Luke, as ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν, ἀρχομαι ἀπὸ, ἐπιμένω, εἶπεν δέ, ὥς. And while of course some of the variants must be rejected, any form of the text which we accept, even von Soden's, which is the shortest, will include more than half of our list of examples. It can safely be affirmed that the passage in its oldest form contained as much distinctively Lukan language as the average passage of equal brevity and simplicity in Luke's acknowledged works.

Against the theory of Lukan authorship the subject-matter and method of treatment offer no objection, but rather a confirmation. The third evangelist shows throughout a sympathy with women and with sinners that is congenial to this passage. Jesus' association with them is frequently criticised by the strict Pharisees in Luke. No further example is needed than the story of Simon and the sinner woman in Luke 7 36-50.

Textual evidence, however, does not encourage the hypothesis. As is well known, the best Greek MSS. omit the passage entirely (Σ, ABCLW et al.). It was known, however, in the West, as is shown by the Vulgate and perhaps some earlier Latin versions, by the references in Ambrose, Augustine, and Jerome, and by the early

Greco-Latin codex D. Nearly all the authorities that contain or refer to it put it in chapter eight or at the end of the Gospel of John. The only exception is the Ferrar group which places it after Luke 21 38.¹¹ There is therefore little textual reason to assign it to any of the canonical Gospels, and less for Luke than for John.¹²

These facts bring us to a dilemma, either solution of which seems to contradict the current standards of New Testament criticism: either (1) the *pericope adulterae* is an original part of Luke's Gospel and was omitted without leaving any appreciable trace in the MS. tradition of that Gospel, or (2) it is written by another than the third evangelist in a style that completely matches his own.¹³

This paper aims not to solve the dilemma but to state it and to show its importance. For if the first solution is the correct one, then we must believe that in spite of their age, multiplicity, and agreement, our authorities for the N. T. text do not preclude such radical divergence from the autographs as the complete omission of a considerable section from one of the four Gospels. If this is possible, then certainly many of the most radical theories of interpolation and the most unsupported textual conjectures are also possible. Even radical scholars have often declared for the probable integrity of the best texts. Here, however, we should have a flagrant case of primitive tampering, for the omission could only be intentional.¹⁴ And so our confidence in the transcriptional accuracy and in the doctrinal primitiveness of

¹¹ Also Evangelistarium 435.

¹² Of course its historicity is not dependent on its canonicity. Its internal character, agreeing as it does with the synoptic stories, bespeaks its genuineness as a tradition.

¹³ I omit as unlikely a third alternative—that it was part of a third (lost) work of the third evangelist. Blass's view that it was from a second edition of the third gospel issued by the author himself combines the difficulties of this view with those of (1) above.

¹⁴ The motive would probably be the fear that the section would be abused to condone looseness in sexual relations.

the earliest available text of the N. T. would be considerably shaken.

If, on the other hand, the passage is not from the pen of the *auctor ad Theophilum*, then some one, whether another author, a translator, or a scribe, intentionally or unintentionally,¹⁵ wrote a style that is indistinguishable from the most distinctive of New Testament styles. In this case style proves to be a most unreliable criterion, and all critical arguments drawn from identity of style—such as the common authorship of John and 1 John, of Luke and Acts, of the Pauline letters, and even of the separate parts of a single work—lose some of their weight. Especially such an argument as that often made concerning the Lukan style of the “we” passages must be re-examined in the light of this evidence.¹⁶ For if in the *pericope adulterae* identity of style does not even prove final Lukan editing, it certainly cannot be used to prove in the “we” passages original Lukan authorship without sources.¹⁷

¹⁵ The decision between these alternatives and concerning the actual origin of the section if not from Luke forms a most interesting problem, but does not affect the implications of the main dilemma. Eus. H. E. III. 39, 16 suggests two possible second-century sources. He says: “(Papias) relates another story of a woman, who was accused of many sins before the Lord, which is contained in the Gospel according to the Hebrews.” The evidence of the story’s western circulation and the variety of its readings may suggest that it was translated into Greek from the Latin. That the later scribes wrote a style like Luke’s is not improbable. Blass, *Evangelium secundum Lucam*, 1897, pp. lvii ff., has given some interesting cases from variants in Mark, and unless one accepts his hypothesis of two editions by Luke, his evidence for the Lukan style of the “Western” text of Luke and Acts (cf. his *Professor Harnack und die Schriften des Lukas*, 1907) will point in the same direction. That this “Lukanizing” is intentional is improbable. Perhaps the style of Luke was the most familiar to the scribes and probably it was the most congenial to them on account of its literary quality. Many of Luke’s minor changes in Mark are made independently by scribes of Mark, e.g., in D. ἀγα for φέρω.

¹⁶ The argument that the “we” passages are so distinctly Lukan in style that the author cannot be using a source is presented most fully by Harnack, *Luke the Physician* (1906), pp. 40–120; *Date of the Acts* (1911), pp. 1–28; cf. also Hawkins, *Horae Synopticae*, Second Edition, pp. 182 ff. The inference of these scholars is that therefore Luke and Acts were written by a companion of Paul, presumably Luke.

¹⁷ Since the foregoing article was written there has come to hand H. McLachlan’s *St. Luke Evangelist and Historian* (1912), with its full and independent argument for the Lukan authorship of the *pericope adulterae* (pp. 94–126).